

**From:** Morning Consult  
**To:** [james\\_cason@ios.doi.gov](mailto:james_cason@ios.doi.gov); [The Morning Consult](#)  
**Subject:** Morning Consult Washington: GOP Senators Defend McConnell After Trump Attacks  
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By [Eli Yokley](#)

## Top Stories

- Republican senators - including Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake and Nevada Sen. Dean Heller, both up for re-election next year - are coming to the defense of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who is facing attacks from President Donald Trump. ([The Hill](#))
- Trump on Thursday declared the opioid crisis a "national emergency," pledging "to spend a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money" to address the problem. He has not yet adopted any specific recommendations from the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. ([The Washington Post](#))

- Russian President Vladimir Putin got the praise of Trump, rather than a critique, after he expelled 755 American diplomats from Moscow. Trump said he was "very thankful that he let go of a large number of people, because now we have a smaller payroll." ([The New York Times](#))
- Some Democratic senators are accusing the Trump administration of ignoring them when nominating judges from their states, breaking longstanding tradition. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has also said he would be willing to advance the nominees without the home-state senators' approval. ([Politico](#))

## Chart Review

[Voters Don't Trust Zinke to Decide on National Monuments](#)

**Morning Consult**

poll public lands Zinke Trump energy

## Events Calendar (All Times Local)

### FRIDAY

Mitchell Institute event on nuclear deterrence	8 a.m.
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Heritage Foundation event on U.S.-Taiwan relations	1:30 p.m.
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## **This Is the Future of Brand Reputation Tracking**

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### **General**

**[FBI Says ISIS Used eBay to Send Terror Cash to U.S.](#)**

**Mark Maremont and Christopher S. Stewart, The Wall Street Journal**

U.S. investigators uncovered a global financial network run by a senior Islamic State official that funneled money to an alleged ISIS operative in the U.S. through fake eBay transactions, according to a recently unsealed FBI affidavit. The alleged recipient of the funds was an American citizen in his early 30s who had been arrested more than a year ago in Maryland after a lengthy Federal Bureau of Investigation surveillance operation that found the first clues to the suspected network.

### **Four Top Cybersecurity Officials Are Leaving US Government**

**Kevin Collier, BuzzFeed News**

Four senior cybersecurity officials are stepping down from their US government positions, raising concerns that an exodus of top leaders may make the federal government more vulnerable to hacking. Two of those resigning - Sean Kelley, the chief information security officer for the Environmental Protection Agency, and Richard Staropoli, the chief information officer for the Department of Homeland Security - had been in their jobs for just a few months.

### **Canadians in Cuba were also treated for hearing loss, Ottawa says amid U.S. probe of possible attack**

**CBC News**

Global Affairs Canada has confirmed at least one Canadian diplomat in Cuba has been treated in hospital after suffering headaches and hearing loss. The information comes a day after the U.S. government said it believed some of its diplomats in Havana had been targeted with a covert sonic device that left them with severe hearing loss.

### **CNN severs ties with Jeffrey Lord**

**Brian Stelter, CNN**

CNN severed ties with Jeffrey Lord on Thursday, hours after he ignited controversy by tweeting the words "Sieg Heil!" at a prominent liberal activist. "Nazi salutes are indefensible," a CNN spokesperson said in a statement.

### **Manafort switching legal team as feds crank up heat on him**

**Josh Dawsey, Politico**

Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort is changing his attorneys as a federal investigation heats up into his financial transactions, according to people familiar with the matter. Manafort's case will now be handled by Miller and Chevalier, a boutique firm in Washington that specializes in complicated financial crimes among other issues, these people said.

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## Presidential

### [Trump says opioid crisis is a national emergency, pledges more money and attention](#)

**Joel Achenbach et al., The Washington Post**

President Trump on Thursday declared the country's opioid crisis a national emergency, saying the epidemic exceeded anything he had seen with other drugs in his lifetime. The statement by the president came in response to a question as he spoke to reporters outside a national security briefing at his golf club in Bedminster, N.J., where he is on a working vacation.

### [Trump Praises Putin Instead of Critiquing Cuts to U.S. Embassy Staff](#)

**Peter Baker, The New York Times**

President Trump offered gratitude rather than outrage on Thursday for Russia's decision to force the United States Embassy in Moscow to slash its personnel by 755 people, despite bipartisan condemnation from other American leaders who protested the Cold War-style move. President Vladimir V. Putin last month ordered the seizure of two American diplomatic properties and directed the American Embassy staff in Russia be cut by more than half in retaliation for sanctions imposed by Congress because of Russia's meddling in last year's presidential election in the United States.

### [Trump Attorney Calls FBI's Raid on Manafort Home 'Gross Abuse'](#)

**Jacob Gershman and Del Quentin Wilber, The Wall Street Journal**

President Donald Trump's outside attorney on Thursday denounced the FBI's July raid of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort's Virginia home as "extraordinary invasive" and a "gross abuse" of the judicial process. In an email to The Wall Street Journal, Trump attorney John Dowd excoriated Special Counsel Robert Mueller's aggressive pursuit of evidence, calling the

raid a gratuitous attempt to bully Mr. Manafort.

### **Trump's Twitter Fury at McConnell Risks Alienating a Key Ally** **Carl Hulse, The New York Times**

By preventing President Barack Obama from filling a Supreme Court vacancy, Senator Mitch McConnell secured Donald J. Trump the signature accomplishment of his young presidency: the confirmation of Justice Neil M. Gorsuch. But any gratitude President Trump felt for Mr. McConnell's first-of-its-kind maneuver appears to be exhausted as the president, upset at the failed health care repeal, has turned his Twitter fire and fury on Mr. McConnell, the one person he may most need to execute a stalled Republican legislative agenda.

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## **Senate**

### **GOP senators rally to McConnell's defense amid Trump attacks** **Jordain Carney, The Hill**

Republican senators are coming to the aid of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, as President Trump has launched a string of attacks against the Kentucky Republican. Four GOP senators offered their support for McConnell on Thursday after the president escalated his war of words with the Senate leader, arguing he's failing to pass the GOP legislative agenda.

### **White House vs. Democrats in tense standoff over judge picks** **Seung Min Kim, Politico**

President Donald Trump's judicial nominees are ignoring key Senate Democrats as they vie for lifetime appointments to the bench - a break from longstanding practice that diminishes the minority's power to provide a check against ideologically extreme judges. The brewing tension between the White House and the Senate over filling an unusually high number of judicial vacancies is impeding the pace at which Trump installs lifetime appointees to the federal bench - so far one of the president's few major victories, with his legislative agenda largely stymied in Congress.

### **Frustrated with Trump, McCain promotes his own Afghan plan** **Richard Lardner, The Associated Press**



In a rebuke of President Donald Trump, Republican Sen. John McCain declared Thursday that "America is adrift in Afghanistan" as he promoted a war strategy that would expand the U.S. counterterrorism effort and provide greater support to Afghan security forces. McCain, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said the U.S. needs to put strict conditions on continued assistance to Afghanistan, and require the Kabul government to demonstrate "measurable progress" in curbing corruption, strengthening the rule of law and improving financial transparency.

### **Jeff Flake Isn't Worrying About A Trump Donor's Investment Against Him**

**Henry J. Gomez, BuzzFeed News**

Robert Mercer, the Republican mega-donor who backs President Donald Trump, is spending big money to defeat Sen. Jeff Flake, one of Trump's loudest Republican critics, in 2018. Kelli Ward, the candidate Mercer favors, fell short last year in a bid to unseat Arizona's other Republican senator, John McCain - despite a major investment from Mercer and his wife.

### **Paul LePage says Eric Brakey is a long shot to beat Angus King**

**Steve Collins, Maine Sun Journal**

Gov. Paul LePage is sounding more and more like he plans next year to challenge independent Angus King's bid for a second term in the U.S. Senate. During a radio interview Thursday, the governor indicated that the only declared major party challenger - state Sen. Eric Brakey, R-Auburn - likely can't win.

### **U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke on 34-day road trip in underdog Senate bid**

**Patrick Svitek, The Texas Tribune**

Looking to overcome the long odds in his U.S. Senate campaign, U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-El Paso, has hit the road for an aggressive 34-day tour of Texas. O'Rourke launched the trip without much fanfare at the end of last month, when he flew to San Antonio and bought a new truck for the trip.

### **'Maybe Putin is right': Republican Senate frontrunner on Russian leader**

**Paul Lewis and Adithya Sambamurthy, The Guardian**

Roy Moore, the controversial former judge and a leading contender in



Alabama's Senate race, has said "maybe Putin is right" and "more akin to me than I know" given the Russian leader's stance on gay marriage. Moore, who was propelled to fame in 2001 over his refusal to remove a monument to the Ten Commandments that he'd installed in state courthouse, is a leading contender to fill the vacancy left by Donald Trump's attorney general, Jeff Sessions.

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## House

### [Congressional Republicans Are Scrambling for a Debt-Ceiling Workaround](#)

**Andrew Desiderio, The Daily Beast**

Six weeks before the government is set to run out of money to pay its bills, congressional Republicans are trying to cobble together an agreement to skirt a dramatic showdown within their own caucus. Four Republican congressional sources told The Daily Beast that GOP lawmakers have explored attaching a "clean" increase of the debt limit to an unrelated, popular, potentially-bipartisan piece of legislation rather than vote on it as a stand-alone measure.

### [Freedom Caucus tries to force Paul Ryan's hand](#)

**Politico**

The conservative House Freedom Caucus will file a petition today to try to force Speaker Paul Ryan to bring up a so-called "clean Obamacare repeal" bill. The legislation passed the House and Senate in the past - it repeals Obamacare after a two-year transition period.

### [Congressional investigators want to question Trump's longtime secretary, Rhona Graff, in Russia probe](#)

**Benjamin Siegel, ABC News**

Congressional investigators want to question President Donald Trump's longtime personal secretary as part of their ongoing probe into a controversial meeting between Trump campaign officials and a Russian lawyer promising dirt on Hillary Clinton, ABC News has learned. Rhona Graff, a senior vice president at the Trump Organization who has worked at Trump Tower for nearly 30 years, has acted as a gatekeeper to Trump.

### [Congressman Visclosky questions Trump boast of strengthening](#)

## [America's nuclear arsenal in a rare outspoken moment](#)

**Dan Carden, NWI Times**

The top Democrat serving on the U.S. House panel responsible for defense spending is condemning President Donald Trump's "loose and imprecise language" concerning nuclear weapons. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Merrillville, took issue Thursday with the Republican's claim, made via Twitter at 6:56 a.m Wednesday, that his "first order as president was to renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal."

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## **States**

### [Questions Emerge Over What Wisconsin Must Give for Foxconn Plant](#)

**Julie Bosman, The New York Times**

When Gov. Scott Walker announced last month that the electronics giant Foxconn had chosen Wisconsin as a site for its new factory, he was a picture of grinning, fist-pumping excitement. It would be the biggest economic project in Wisconsin history, Mr. Walker promised, with a \$10 billion investment, as many as 13,000 jobs and a high-tech campus the size of 11 Lambeau Fields.

### [Political rally at Missouri State Fair ruffles feathers](#)

**Kurt Erickson, St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

A year after the state's top farm organizations endorsed a Democrat for governor for the first time, Republican Gov. Eric Greitens will preside over a "Salute to Agriculture" next week at the Missouri State Fair. In a move that could help burnish the new governor's farm-country credentials after last year's snub, the first-ever event is being organized by the Missouri Republican Party, which says it wants to "celebrate Missouri's long history as an agricultural powerhouse."

### [Terry McAuliffe: "there's total dysfunction in Washington"](#)

**Shannon Vavra, Axios**

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe and Steve Benjamin, the mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, both blamed Washington for a failure to find solutions to the nation's problems. Officials in Washington "can't come to agreement on

anything," McAuliffe told Axios' Mike Allen at a U.S. Conference of Mayors discussion on "City & State Partnerships."

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## Advocacy

### [Conservative Groups Call for Delay on Medical Device and Insurance Taxes](#)

**Jon Reid, Morning Consult**

Dozens of conservative groups are calling on congressional Republican leaders to make sure that the Affordable Care Act's taxes on health insurers and medical device makers do not take effect next year. Congressional Republicans had aimed to permanently scrap nearly all Obamacare taxes as part of their effort to repeal and replace the ACA.

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## Opinions, Editorials and Perspectives

### [Let Calm and Cool Trump 'Fire and Fury'](#)

**Peggy Noonan, The Wall Street Journal**

What is happening with North Korea is not analogous to what happened in 1962, except for the word crisis. Fifty-five years ago was a different age with vastly different players and dynamics. We all mine the past to make our points, but Mr. Gorka's evoking of the Cuban crisis to summon political support is intellectually cheap and self-defeating.

### [Donald Trump's First Nine Holes](#)

**Roger Cohen, The New York Times**

Golf is a big deal to President Trump. Over the years he has defended his stubborn character by saying a change of swing is a mistake, and dismissed Mitt Romney as a guy who can't sink a three-foot putt.

### [John McCain's Defense Cut](#)

**The Editorial Board, The Wall Street Journal**

There is no more passionate and principled advocate for greater military spending than Senator John McCain, so we wonder if the Arizona Republican appreciates that he recently voted to guarantee weaker U.S. defenses. To wit,

his vote to kill health reform means that entitlements like Medicaid will continue to squeeze the Pentagon like an ever-tightening vise long after he has retired.

### **[Democrats try to co-opt populist rage. Hilarity ensues.](#)**

**Matt Bai, Yahoo News**

Washington was abuzz this week with talk about the new Democratic agenda, "A Better Deal," which is suddenly dominating news coverage and captivating voters with a plan to remake the American economy, sending Republicans scrambling for a viable platform of their own in advance of the midterm elections. No, not really.

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## **Research Reports and Polling**

### **[An Early Look at 2018 Premium Changes and Insurer Participation on ACA Exchanges](#)**

**Rabah Kamal et al., The Kaiser Family Foundation**

Each year insurers submit filings to state regulators detailing their plans to participate on the Affordable Care Act marketplaces (also called exchanges). These filings include information on the premiums insurers plan to charge in the coming year and which areas they plan to serve.



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